

LABOR RELATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

The Labor Relations Committee of the Willmar City Council met on Thursday, April 23, 2015 in Conference Room No. 1 at the City Office Building.

Present:	Steve Ahmann	Chair
	Jim Dokken	Vice Chair
	Denis Anderson	Member
	Ron Christianson	Member

Others present: Interim City Administrator Kevin Halliday, Finance Director Steve Okins, Planning and Development Director Bruce Peterson, Public Works Director Sean Christensen, Wastewater Superintendent Colleen Thompson, Administrative Assistant Janell Sommers, Administrative Assistant Sue Edwards, and David Little, "West Central Tribune."

Frank Madden, Labor Attorney for the City, was present via teleconference.

Item No. 1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Council Member Ahmann at 5:53 p.m.

Item No. 2 Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Item No.3 Department Head, Supervisors and Confidential Employees Labor Contract Grievances

Interim City Administrator Kevin Halliday noted he had received two additional grievances nearly identical to that of Colleen Thompson, Wastewater Superintendent from Sean Christensen, Public Works Director, and Bruce Peterson, Planning and Development Services Director. A motion was made by Council Member Dokken to add the two additional grievances to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member Anderson, and carried.

Planning and Development Director Bruce Peterson came before the Committee to present Step 3 of the grievance procedure as provided in Article III of the contract and agreement between the City of Willmar and Department Heads, Supervisors and Confidential Employees, 2010.

Mr. Peterson represented the three grievants consisting of himself, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Colleen Thompson and Public Works Director Sean Christensen as the nature of each grievance was the same. The grievance for the three individuals relates to Article XV, 15.2 of the contract and agreement between the City of Willmar and Department Heads, Supervisors and Confidential Employees, which states if the employee's performance, as determined by the employer is satisfactory, a 1.5% increase on base salary should be granted. The City has not awarded the 1.5% on the base salary. The grievants based their issue on the current base salary being above the mid-point of the City adopted pay range, the three employee's performance in 2014 met or exceeded expectations as determined by the employer, thereby warranting a 1.5% base salary increase effective on each employee's anniversary date.

The City's labor attorney, Frank Madden, said via telephone conference that the contract does not talk about a salary maximum, but it would be impossible to calculate a mid-point as listed in the contract if you didn't have a minimum and a maximum wage and stated there appears to be no merit to grant the grievances. He further advised the City representatives that the grievance is identical to the 2014 grievance and cannot be grieved a second time. Mr. Madden further advised the Committee members that they may go into closed session to deliberate the grievance without recording the closed session. The grievance allows five days to deliver an answer.

Council Member Christianson made a motion, seconded by Council Member Anderson to go into closed session. The meeting was closed at 5:32 p.m.

The meeting was reopened at 6:00 p.m. on a motion by Council Member Anderson, seconded by Council Member Christianson.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Sommers
Administrative Assistant
Recording Secretary